

Wayne Allard

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For Release:
June 7, 2000

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SENATE ENERGY COMMITTEE PASSES ALLARD FISH RECOVERY BILL UNANIMOUSLY LEGISLATION WOULD RECOVER ENDANGERED FISH IN UPPER COLORADO AND SAN JUAN RIVER BASINS

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today unanimously passed legislation offered by U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) to provide authorization to the Bureau of Reclamation for an endangered fish recovery program in the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River Basins.

“The unanimous committee vote is a strong endorsement for this legislation and will be very helpful in gaining Senate passage of my bill,” Allard said following the committee’s action. “This legislation is the product of years of meetings between water districts, power users and environmental groups. It’s goal is to recover endangered fish while continuing to meet future water supply needs in the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico.”

Allard’s legislation would authorize a total of \$100 million for capital construction, operations and maintenance to implement a program to provide fish ladders, hatchery facilities, removal of non-native species and habitat restoration. The cost sharing program would authorize \$46 million of federal funding from the Bureau of Reclamation and the remaining \$54 million would come from power revenues and state contributions.

“Without the federal government’s commitment to help fund the program within an established time frame, future water development in the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River Basins will be in jeopardy,” added Allard. “This issue is extremely important to Colorado and the other Upper Basin states who rely on this water.”

Allard’s legislation has drawn support from the Upper Basin states of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico. In addition, the legislation is supported by the Environmental Defense Fund, The Nature Conservancy, the Colorado River Water Conservation District, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy, Colorado Water Congress and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

“The names of the groups that Senator Allard has brought to the table to deal with this problem is nothing short of amazing,” said U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO) a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. “You have water users and oil companies on one side and environmental groups on the other side, who usually mix like cats and dogs, all supporting this bill.”

“Without this critical funding for these recovery programs, the fight over the rights of our citizens to develop and use water compact entitlements would continue. Senator Allard’s leadership in breaking this impasse has been crucial,” said Greg Walcher, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

The legislation now proceeds to the full Senate for consideration. A companion House bill sponsored by Utah First District Representative Jim Hansen is pending action in the House Resources Committee. That legislation enjoys the bi-partisan co-sponsorship of five members of the Colorado delegation: Republican Representatives Scott McInnis, Tom Tancredo, Bob Schaffer, and Democrat Representatives Diana DeGette and Mark Udall.

“With today’s action by the Senate Energy Committee, I am very confident we will be able to get this legislation passed this session,” concluded Allard.

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